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(CIA)

(BY DANIEL GILMORE)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION, A CONSERVATIVE THINK TANK, TODAY BLUNTLY CRITICIZED PRESIDENT REAGAN FOR NOT PAYING ADEQUATE ATTENTION TO PROBLEMS OF THE INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING COMMUNITY.

THE FOUNDATION, WHICH IN THE PAST HAS BEEN SUPPORTIVE OF A STRONG AND VIGOROUS U.S. INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY, ALSO ACCUSED THE CIA OF "STAGGERING FAILURES" IN INFORMATION ANALYSIS.

IT REPORTED IN ITS NATIONAL SECURITY RECORD PUBLICATION THAT REAGAN, WHOSE ADMINISTRATION HAS ADOPTED MANY SUGGESTIONS MADE IN THE FOUNDATION'S PRE-ELECTION POSITION PAPERS, WAS NOT GIVING ENOUGH ATTENTION TO INTELLIGENCE.

"RECENT EVENTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION IS NOT GREATLY CONCERNED WITH THESE PROBLEMS AT THE PRESENT," IT SAID. "JUST AS THERE HAS BEEN A FAILURE TO INITIATE NEW DEFENSE POLICIES, REFORMING THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY APPEARS TO HAVE LOW PRIORITY." THE FOUNDATION SAID "DRASTIC REFORM" WAS CALLED FOR IN THE CIA'S ABILITY TO ASSESS DATA AND GATHER INTELLIGENCE IN AN ATMOSPHERE FREE FROM "INSTITUTIONALIZED BIAS."

THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION COULD TAKE, THE FOUNDATION SAID, WOULD BE TO SET UP AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION COMPOSED OF VETERAN ANALYSTS AND CRITICS.

"TO DRIVE THROUGH NEEDED CHANGE, A HIGH-POWERED, INDEPENDENT COMMISSION IS ESSENTIAL," IT SAID.

THE REPORT SAID "DISCUSSION OF FAULTY INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS MUST FOCUS ON THE CIA, THE DESIGNATED PRODUCER OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES FOR THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER TOP POLICY MAKERS."

THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY, THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICES AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH CONTRIBUTE TO THE INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES, IT SAID, BUT THE FINAL CIA REPORTS ARE CONSIDERED 'NATIONAL.'

"ALTHOUGH AGENCIES MAY REGISTER A FORMAL DISSENT ON PARTICULAR POINTS," IT SAID, "A HIGH VALUE IS PLACED ON CONSENSUS. EVEN UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES, THIS EMPHASIS RESULTS IN AN ENSHRINEMENT OF THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR OF INTELLIGENCE OPINION AND ALL TOO OFTEN LEADS TO 'PARTY-LINING' OR ANTICIPATING THE VIEWS OF POLICYMAKERS."